

Lebanon

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LEBANON: New Syrian Attacks

Syrian attacks over the weekend on Phalange positions in the mountains northwest of Zahlah have improved Damascus' ability to threaten traditional Christian areas. [REDACTED]

The new clashes began on Saturday when Syrian forces, backed by their Lebanese leftist allies, launched clearing operations against Phalange positions [REDACTED]

The new Syrian military moves not only restrict further Phalange access to the Zahlah area but place Syrian or Syrian-supported troops in a position to carry any future fighting directly into the Christian areas. Syrian guns, moreover, would be in a position to threaten the traditional Christian districts where many families of Phalange militiamen from Beirut have taken refuge during fighting in the capital. [REDACTED]

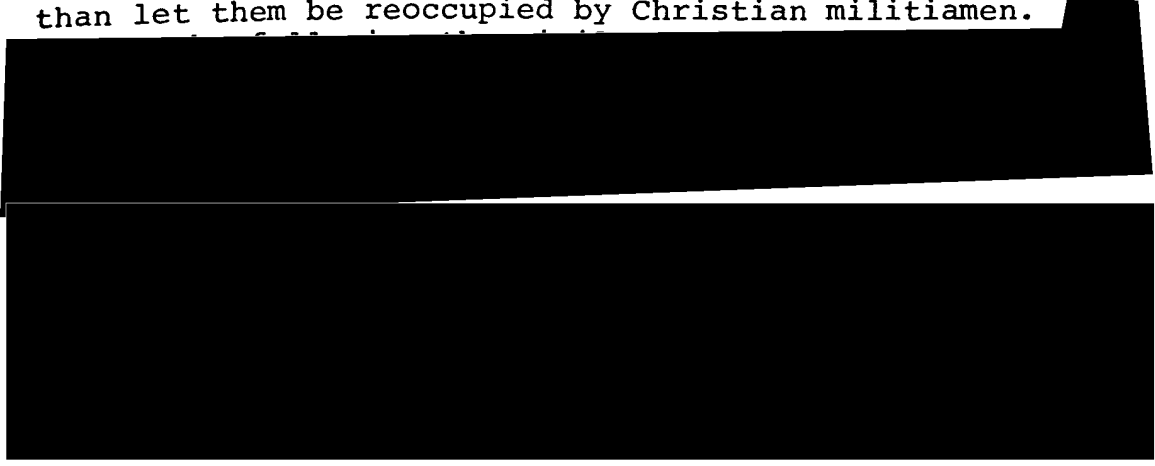
It is not clear what Syrian intentions are. [REDACTED]

The Syrians are, however, in a position to expand the conflict with the Phalange. [REDACTED]

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Even if the Syrians agree at some point to give up the new positions they seized over the weekend, they undoubtedly will turn them over to their allies rather than let them be reoccupied by Christian militiamen.



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